

# Voyageur & French Canadian Folk Songs

*Arranged and annotated by Lois Samis Lund<sup>©</sup>*

For the 2008 David Thompson Brigade  
the 2010 & 2013 Paul Kane Dinners  
and the 2013 Rideau Canal Canoe Brigade

Sometimes referred to as the "unofficial anthem" of French Canada, **A la claire fontaine** is a beautiful ballad of a lost love. Once again it has a lot of words in either language but is worth the effort for its nostalgic melody. The song came from France but its Canadian melody is quite different. One of its early appearances in Canada was at Port Royal in 1608 where it was sung by the men in Champlain's "Order of Good Cheer."

If you have the skills, feel free to be creative with the harmony; the guitar chords which I provide are the "generic" version.

## A la claire fontaine

traditional voyageur song

1. *À la clai - re fon - tai - ne*  
1. By the clear run - ning foun - tain

*M'en al - lant pro - me - ner,*  
I strayed one sum - mer day.

*J'ai trou - vé l'eau si bel - le*  
The wat - er looked so cool - ing

*Que je m'y suis bai - gné.*  
I bathed with - out de - lay.

**Refrain**  
*Lui - ya long - temps que je t'ai - me,*  
Ma - ny long years have I loved you,

*Ja - mais je ne t'ou - blie - rai.*  
Ev - er in my heart you'll stay.

2 *Sous les feuilles d'un chêne*  
*Je me suis fait sécher.*  
*Sur la plus haute branche*  
*Le rossignol chantait.*  
Refrain...

2 Beneath an oak tree shady  
I dried myself that day  
When from the topmost branch  
A bird's song came my way.  
Refrain...

3 *Chante, rossignol, chante,*  
*Toi qui as le coeur gai.*  
*Tu as le coeur à rire,*  
*Moi je l'ai-t-à pleurer.*  
Refrain...

3 Sing, nightingale, keep singing,  
Your heart is always gay.  
You have no cares to grieve you,  
While I could weep today.  
Refrain...

4 *J'ai perdu ma maîtresse*  
*Sans l'avoir mérité.*  
*Pour un bouquet de roses*  
*Que je lui refusai.*  
Refrain...

4 You have no cares to grieve you,  
While I could weep today,  
For I have lost my loved one  
In such a senseless way.  
Refrain...

5 *Je voudrais que la rose*  
*Fût encore au rosier.*  
*Et moi et ma maîtresse*  
*Dans les mêm's amitiés.*  
Refrain...

5 She wanted some red roses  
But I did rudely say  
She could not have the roses  
That I had picked that day.  
Refrain...

6 Now I wish those red roses  
Were on their bush today,  
While I and my beloved  
Still went our old sweet way.  
Refrain...

**Ah! si mon moine voulait danser** is based on a pun on the word "moine" which in France means "monk" but in Quebec can also mean "spinning top". A young lady offers a monk many incentives to get him to dance with her - a hood, a sash, a rosary, a home-spun gown, and a psalter, and then concludes, "If he had not taken a vow of poverty, many other things I would give to him." (Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs - Edith Fowke). In Quebec this song has been a popular song for children to sing while playing with a spinning top. I have provided the English words to aid in understanding the text, but like most of these *voyageur* songs, it really needs to be sung in French! A very pleasant version of the melody can be found at <http://members.shaw.ca/tunebook/monmoine.htm>.

## Ah! si mon moine voulait danser

traditional voyageur song

Ah! si mon moi-ne vou-lait dan-ser! Ah! si mon moi-ne vou-lait dan-ser! Un  
Oh, if my monk would — dance with me! A big brown hood I would give to thee. Oh,  
ca - pu - chon je lui don - ne - rais, Un ca - pu - chon je lui don ne-rais.  
if my monk would — dance with me! A big brown hood I would give to thee.

**Refrain**

Dan - se, mon moin', dan - se! tu n'en tends pas la dan - se, Tu  
Come, my monk, let's dance now, To get ther let us skip now, As  
n'en tends pas mon mou - lin, lon la, Tu n'en - tends pas mon mou - lin mar-cher.  
light ly on the — mea sures go, Our feet move mer ri ly to and fro.

2. |: Ah! si mon moine voulait danser! :|  
|: Un ceinturon je lui donnerais. :|  
**Refrain**
3. |: Ah! si mon moine voulait danser! :|  
|: Un chapelet je lui donnerais. :|  
**Refrain**
4. |: Ah! si mon moine voulait danser! :|  
|: Un froc de bur' je lui donnerais. :|  
**Refrain**
5. |: Ah! si mon moine voulait danser! :|  
|: Un beau psautier je lui donnerais. :|  
**Refrain**
6. |: S'il n'avait fait voeu de pauvreté, :|  
|: Bien d'autres chos' je lui donnerais. :|  
**Refrain**

2. |: Oh, if my monk would dance with me! :|  
|: A fine wide sash I would give to thee. :|  
**Refrain**
3. |: Oh, if my monk would dance with me! :|  
|: A rosary I would give to thee. :|  
**Refrain**
4. |: Oh, if my monk would dance with me! :|  
|: A homespun robe I would give to thee. :|  
**Refrain**
5. |: Oh, if my monk would dance with me! :|  
|: A psalter rich I would give to thee. :|  
**Refrain**
6. |: If it weren't for your vow of poverty, :|  
|: There's nicer things you would get from me. :|  
**Refrain**

French and English words found at <http://ingeb.org/songs/ahsimonm.html>

# Alouette

The musical score for "Alouette" is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody starts on a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter note B4. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The third staff continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The score includes guitar chords (G, D7) and performance markings such as "Fine" and "D.C. al Fine".

1 G D7 G

3 G D7 G *Fine*

5 G D7 G

7 D7 D7 D7 *D.C. al Fine*

# Auprès de ma blonde

traditional voyageur song

Au jar - din de mon pè - re, les lau - riers sont fleu - ris, — Tous  
 Out in my fa - ther's gar - den, the lau - rel blooms its best. — And

les oi - seaux du mon - de vont y fai - re leurs nids Au - près de ma blon - de,  
 ev' - ry lit - tle bird there is build - ing its own nest.

Qu'il fait bon, fait bon, fait bon. Au - près de ma blon - de, Qu'il fait bon rê - ver. —

**Auprès de ma Blonde** (Next to my Girlfriend) was a popular song in France originating in the 17th century, among French sailors and soldiers imprisoned in the Netherlands during the Franco-Dutch War, during the reign of Louis XIV. It became highly popular on both sides of the Atlantic as a military march, a drinking song and nursery rhyme. The tune may be found at: <http://www.acadian.org/blonde.html>

The lyrics are best left in the original French but an English translation of the refrain is: Near to my sweetheart, How pleasant that makes it, Near to my sweetheart, How pleasant that makes it to sleep.

The French lyrics:

Au jardin de mon père les lauriers sont fleuris  
 Au jardin de mon père les lauriers sont fleuris  
 Tous les oiseaux du monde vont y faire leurs nids.

Qui chante pour les filles qui n'ont pas de maris  
 Qui chante pour les filles qui n'ont pas de maris  
 Pour moi, je chante guère car j'en ais un joli.  
 Refrain

Refrain

Auprès de ma blonde, qu'il fait bon, fait bon, fait bon,  
 Auprès de ma blonde, qu'il fait bon dormir.

Que donneriez-vous, belle, pour avoir un mari?  
 Que donneriez-vous, belle, pour avoir un mari?  
 Je donnerai Versailles, Paris et St. Denis.

Refrain

La caille, la turturette, et la jolie perdris  
 La caille, la turturette, et la jolie perdris  
 Et la jolie colombe qui chante jour et nuit.

Refrain

Les tours de Notre Dame et les cloches de mon pays  
 Les tours de Notre Dame et les cloches de mon pays  
 Et ma jolie colombe qui chante jour et nuit.

Refrain

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The 2008 David Thompson Brigade

**C'est l'aviron** is the song that was used as the theme music in the old National Film Board production "The Voyageurs." Like **En roulant**, **C'est l'aviron** is from medieval France, but was adapted by the voyageurs to fit the task of paddling for endless hours. These two songs have similar characteristics in the way that one verse layers upon the next. **C'est l'aviron** has a very catchy tune, but for those not fluent in French the words can be overwhelming - I would suggest, if this is the situation, to use nonsense words (or English) for the verse and sing the refrain in either English or French. The words of this song (once again with an endless number of verses) and a version of the melody may be found at <http://ingeb.org/songs/aviron.html>.

## C'est l'aviron

traditional voyageur song

1. *Rid* *ing* *a* - *long* *the* *road* *from* *Ro* - *chelle* *ci* *ty,*  
*I.M'en* *re* - *ve* - *nant* *de* *la* *jo* - *lie* *Ro* - *chel* - *le,*

*Rid* *ing* *a* - *long* *the* *road* *from* *Ro* *chelle* *ci* *ty,*  
*I.M'en* *re* - *ve* - *nant* *de* *la* *jo* - *lie* *Ro* - *chel* - *le,*

*I* *met* *three* *girls* *and* *all* *of* *them* *were* *pret* - *ty.*  
*J'ai* *ren* - *con* - *tré* *trois* *jo* - *lies* *de* - *moi* - *sel* - *lés.*

*Pull* *on* *the* *oars* *as* *we* *glide* *a* *long* *to* *geth* *er,*  
*I.M'en* *re* - *ve* - *nant* *de* *la* *jo* - *lie* *Ro* - *chel* - *le,* *J'ai*

*Pull* *on* *the* *oars* *as* *we* *glide* *a* *long.*  
*ren* - *con* - *tré* *trois* *jo* - *lies* *de* - *moi* - *sel*

2. |: I met three girls and all of them were pretty; :|  
 By chance I chose the one who was the beauty.

Refrain:

3. |: By chance I chose the one who was the beauty; :|  
 Lifted her up so she could ride beside me.

Refrain:

4. |: Lifted her up so she could ride beside me; :|  
 With ne'er a word we rode along together.

Refrain:

.... And there are lots more verses following!

2. |: *J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles; :|*  
*J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle.*

Refrain:

3. |: *J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle; :|*  
*J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle.*

Refrain:

4. |: *J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle; :|*  
*J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.*

Refrain:

5. |: *J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle; :|*  
*Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire.*

Refrain:

# En Passant Par La Lorraine

Traditional Voyager song

F A<sub>m</sub> B<sup>b</sup> C



F A<sub>m</sub> B<sup>b</sup> C



F A<sub>m</sub> G<sub>m</sub> C<sub>7</sub>



F A<sub>m</sub> B<sup>b</sup> C F



**En roulant ma boule** is a very well known voyageur song which originated in fifteenth century France. Scholars researching this song have found over 100 versions. This is not surprising, because **En roulant** is typical of folk songs (particularly work songs) from all over the world and in many different time periods. The singers made up verses of the songs as they went along in a call/response manner - one person (the leader) would sing a phrase and the rest of the group would echo it back. The leadership could be passed through the members of the group throughout the song. Very often the verse of the song would be a rhyming couplet - and often each succeeding verse would have as its first line the same words that were used as the second line of the preceding verse. Yes, the songs did go on forever - but why not, if you are doing an endlessly repetitive task!

I chose this song as a starter because it is very simple, you only have to know a very few words, yet it opens a whole creative opportunity. If you have convinced yourself that you can't sing, you can still make up verses and call them out at the appropriate time in the song.

It has been requested that I provide "the" English and French lyrics. With over 100 versions who is to say which ones are correct, but I have included links to one version in each language:

(French - <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/alain.perron/Chansonvoyageur.htm>

and English - <http://www.mythstories.com/grizzlyL.html>). Each one goes on for a thousand verses and the English one lets you listen to the melody. However I think you will have a lot more fun (and possibility of success!) if you follow the example that I have given you with the written music.

A suggested use of the song on the 2008 DTB is to adjust its tempo to the paddling speed, and make up verses to poke fun at the canoe paddling next to you and its members. I am sure that some of our made up verses will become favourites to be repeated at the campfires where there will be instruments to carry the tune.

## En roulant ma boule traditional voyageur song arr. Lois Samis Lund

**Group** *G C G G D7 G*  
*En rou lant ma bou le rou lant, En rou lant ma bou le*

*G C G G D7 G* **Leader**  
*En rou lant ma bou le rou lant, En rou lant ma this le.* 1.Now  
 2.We

*G C G C G* **Group**  
*this make is how we'll sing our song. En rou lant ma bou le* 1.Now  
 2.We

*G C G C D7* **Leader**  
*this make is how we'll sing our song. En rou lant ma bou le* We  
 And

*G D7 G D7 G D7 D.C. al Fine* **Group**  
*make so it as the words we are ne a ver wrong, Rou li, rou lant, ma bou le rou lant.*



# Tique Tique Taque

## (J'entends le moulin)

traditional voyageur song

J'en - tends le mou - lin, ti - que ti - que ta - que.  
 I hear the mill wheel, ti - que ti - que ta - que. *Fine*

J'en - tends le mou - lin, ta - que.  
 I hear the mill wheel ta - que.

Mon père a fait ba - tir ma - son, ti - que  
 Fa - ther is hav - ing a house built ti - que

ta - - - que. ti - que ta - - - que.  
 ta - - - que, ti - que ta - - - que.

This is a wonderful little tune to play around with on percussion instruments, (spoons, wood blocks, or play the tune on pitched percussion) With a few French words and lots of creativity it works just fine for the non-French speaker. There is a very spirited performance by a girls' concert choir at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOkgIERRQOw&NR=1>

J'entends le moulin (tique tique taque)  
 Mon père a fait bâtir maison.  
 La fait bâtir à trois pignons.  
 Sont trois charpentiers qui la font.  
 Le plus jeune c'est mon mignon.  
 Qu'apporte-tu dans ton jupon?  
 C'est un pâté de trois pigeons.  
 Asseyons-nous et le mangeons.  
 En s'asseyant il fit un bond,  
 Qui fit trembler mer et poisson  
 Et les cailloux qui sont au fond.

I hear the millwheel (tique tique taque)  
 My father is having a house built.  
 It's being built with three gables.  
 There are three carpenters building it.  
 The youngest is my darling.  
 What do you have in your apron?  
 It's a pie made of three pigeons.  
 Let's sit down and eat it.  
 While sitting down they all leapt up,  
 Causing the sea and fish to tremble,  
 and the stones on the bottom of the sea.

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# Un Canadien Errant

Traditional voyaguer song

F                  F/E                  D<sub>m</sub>                  B $\flat$                   G<sub>m</sub>                  C

C                  B $\flat$                   A<sub>m</sub>                  B $\flat$                   C                  D<sub>m</sub>

7

B $\flat$                   B $\flat$                   C                  G<sub>m</sub>                  C                  F

13

Detailed description: The image shows three staves of musical notation for the song 'Un Canadien Errant'. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: F, F/E, Dm, Bb, Gm, and C. The second staff starts with a measure rest labeled '7'. The melody continues with quarter and half notes. Above the staff, the chords are: C, Bb, Am, Bb, C, and Dm. The third staff starts with a measure rest labeled '13'. The melody continues with quarter and half notes. Above the staff, the chords are: Bb, Bb, C, Gm, C, and F. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

# Vive la Canadienne!

traditional voyageur song

Vi ve la Ca na dien - ne! Vo - le, mon coeur, vo - le!  
vi - ve la ca - na - dien - ne et ses jo - lis yeux doux,  
et ses jo - lis yeux doux, doux, doux, et ses jo - lis yeux doux, — et  
ses jo - lis yeux doux, doux, doux, et ses jo - lis yeux doux, —  
*D.C. al Fine*

The tune of this wonderful toast to the Canadian maiden with the beautiful eyes came from 17th century France but the words were probably made up by the *voyageurs*. The melody is available at: <http://members.shaw.ca/tunebook/vivecan.htm>

Vive la Canadienne  
Vole, mon coeur, vole!  
Vive la Canadienne  
Et ses jolis yeux doux  
Et ses jolis yeux doux, doux, doux  
Et ses jolis yeux doux.

Nous la menons aux noces  
Vole mon coeur, vole!  
Nous la menons aux noces  
Dans tous ses beaux atours  
Dans tous ses beaux atours, 'tours, 'tours  
Dans tous ses beaux atours.

On danse avec nos blondes  
Vole mon coeur, vole!  
On danse avec nos blondes  
Nous changeons tour à tour  
Nous changeons tour à tour, tour, tour  
Nous changeons tour à tour.

Ainsi le temps se passe  
Vole mon coeur, vole!  
Ainsi le temps se passe  
Il est vraiment bien doux  
Il est vraiment bien doux, doux, doux  
Il est vraiment bien doux.